



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 17, 2019

Agenda Item: Brucellosis Proposed 2020 Annual Work Plan

Action Needed: Final Adoption

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: In January 2013, the commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for use in areas with brucellosis (the Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). Annual work plans describe specific management actions based upon these recommendations. The proposed 2020 annual work plan essentially restates the 2019 plan to include hazing, limited fencing, limited lethal removal of elk, habitat modifications, and other efforts to move elk away from cattle at small scales to reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle. The proposed 2020 plan also maintains previous landownership and date descriptions clarifying where and when elk may be lethally removed to move elk away from cattle. The number of elk that may be taken is also proposed unchanged. This proposed final adoption represents no changes to the plan endorsed for public comment at the August 15 commission meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The public comment opportunity for the proposed annual work plan ran from the August 15 commission meeting through 5 p.m. Monday, September 16. Four generally supportive comments were received and have been forwarded to the commission. While none of the comments proposed specific adjustments to the management tool types within the plan, there was a request to incorporate tribal treaty hunting opportunities and for the department to explore these opportunities with the tribe.

Alternatives and Analysis: The proposal may be adopted as presented or with adjustment per FWP justifications, public comment, and commission discussion. The proposed plan restates the 2019 plan with a growing history of implementation in response to mixing situations between elk and cattle.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends adoption of the proposed 2020 annual work plan. Without an annual work plan, there are no authorized management options specifically to mitigate the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle.

Proposed Motion: I move to approve for public comment the proposed 2020 annual work plan for elk management in areas with brucellosis as proposed by FWP.